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County: Forsyth

**Paper for: Interview with Mr. J Dudley Watts Jr.
(Forsyth County Manager).**

Date of interview: 27th of June 2014

Hello, My name is Blaise Gourley.

I am the 4-H County Council president for Forsyth county.

I recently interviewed Mr. J Dudley Watts Jr on his role as County Manager.

Mr. Watts is the County Manager for Forsyth County.

Mr. Watts will have held the County Manager role for eight years this coming October. He also previously held a deputy manager role for twenty years in Pender County, and was the manager in Granville for nine years as well. His experience was made evident in the interview.

So what does the County Manager do?

The County manager oversees day to day operations. He is responsible for collecting information for the county budget as well as presenting it to the board.

He is responsible for ensuring all laws are followed that are required by the state of NC. Although there is a committee who takes care of the purchasing of the county, he is still responsible for ensuring it is done properly.

And finally, he is consulted when the board wants to make a decision, to ensure the decision is unbiased and will still be beneficial down the road.

A County manager is appointed by the board of county commissioners.

He has an agreement that states he can be released at any time for any reason. So his position (unlike the elected commissioners) can end at any point.

So a strong relationship with the commissioners is essential.

Mr. Watts's job requires involvement with the attorney (who is responsible for the legal affairs), as well as the clergy (who keeps minutes from the meetings).

Mr. Watts described this as a balance of power similar to the three powers in government. Judicial, legislative and executive.

Mr. Watts is required to abide by a code of ethics which bans him from any participation with any political groups in the community. If the Code is not followed it can lead to job termination. So it is very important for County Managers to keep themselves in check with this Code.

Though the job can be tedious. "Really every decision you make, your subject to explaining it for public consumption."

Mr. Watts loves his job. Why you might ask?

Because everyday he is serving the community. Not only with his office work, but he is

a member of many boards in the community, including United Way. He also has first hand involvement with the citizens of the county. Commissioners will often send citizens to the county manager so he can help them. He says that he likes when this happens because he gets to see and understand the problem. "If I can make someone feel heard and confident of the leadership in there county government, AND help solve there problem. I've had a pretty good day."

I can honestly say I enjoyed our interview and brief tour of the county administration building.

Mr. Watts was knowledgeable, engaging, and open about his job.

I learned a lot, and I am now more aware and appreciative of all our county government does for us, the citizens.

I can't wait to attend the County Board meeting this coming July.